

VZCZCXRO8283

PP RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHDA RUEHDBU RUEHDF RUEHFL RUEHIK RUEHKW RUEHLA
RUEHLN RUEHLZ RUEHROV RUEHSR RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHBW #0171/01 0361634
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 051634Z FEB 07
FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0199
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC 1291
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
RHMFISS/CDR USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RXFEAA/HQ AFSOUTH NAPLES IT
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BELGRADE 000171

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O.12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PBTS](#) [PHUM](#) [SR](#) [MW](#) [YI](#)

SUBJECT: REACTION TO AHTISAARI'S BELGRADE VISIT

11. (U) Summary: Serbian political leaders have reacted almost universally negatively to Special Envoy Ahtisaari's 2/2 status plan. President Tadic has convened the representatives of all the parties to a meeting on 2/5 to chart the course ahead. End Summary

12. (U) Ahtisaari's time in Belgrade was brief and, other than a small gathering of IDP's outside the Presidency, without any protests or disruption. After the sole official meeting with President Tadic, both Ahtisaari's press conference and Tadic's public statement received major press throughout the weekend.

13. (U) Ahtisaari's press conference received major coverage, highlighting his comments that the compromise proposal was the result of a year's intensive work, that he will invite Belgrade and Pristina to participate in further "consultations," and that Kosovo's ultimate status is an issue for the UNSC. All major electronic and print media reported the major points of the proposal, as outlined in the UNOSEK executive summary.

14. (U) Tadic called the proposal "unacceptable" because it is "contrary to international law" and would set a "dangerous precedent." He made it quite clear in his public statements that he had "informed Marti Ahtisaari that Serbia and I, as President, will never accept the independence of Kosovo." He added that the proposal did not delineate independence for Kosovo but did not mention Serbia's sovereignty over the region either, leading Tadic to believe that independence was a possible outcome. Tadic hinted that he might be legally prohibited from engaging in follow-on talks, and has invited all party leaders to convene on Monday (2/5) so that he can discuss with them the text of Ahtisaari's proposal.

15. (U) Having refused to receive Ahtisaari, PM Kostunica released a statement quickly after the visit denouncing the proposal as "illegitimate" on the basis that it "violates the UN Charter and international law." Kostunica charged Ahtisaari with exceeding his mandate from the Security Council, which did not authorize him "to deal

with Serbia's state status and delve into its sovereignty and territorial integrity."

¶6. (U) PM Advisor Aleksandar Simic urged over the weekend that a session of parliament be convened before the next round of UNOSEK consultations on February 13, to decide on a new negotiation team. Simic continued to reinforce Kostunica's argument that the outgoing government could only handle technical matters, suggesting that an all-unity negotiating team, made up of representatives of all the parties, could be empowered to negotiate by the parliament until a government is formed.

¶7. (U) The Serbian Orthodox Church's Holy Synod rejected the proposal as "legal violence that sought to take away by force an invaluable part of its territory."

¶8. (U) Statements of support for the proposal from the Contact Group, EU, NATO, USG (State Department spokesman), UNMIK, the Macedonian PM (who met with Kosovo opposition leader Hasim Thaci over the weekend), all received coverage in Serbia. German Ambassador Zobel also made statements to the press, urging the Serbian government to engage in follow-up talks. Serbian press also carried statements by Polish President Kaczynski in support of Belgrade, and continued discussion of Russia's position: drawing from Lavrov's recent statements denying that Putin had said Russia would veto a resolution in the council, and restating Russia's support for a negotiated solution.

BELGRADE 00000171 002 OF 002

¶9. (U) In general, weekend media coverage supported Serbia's engagement in follow up negotiations. Representatives from most parties called for a quick convening of the Serbian parliament as early as the end of the week to provide clear guidance on how to proceed. Publication of recent poll results from the prestigious firm Strategic Marketing suggested broad public support for compromise and negotiations. Even the influential and usually pro-government daily Politika ran an editorial in its Sunday edition in support of accepting the Ahtisaari proposal.

¶10. (SBU) Comment: As expected, Ahtisaari's visit has made Kosovo the dominant issue in the ongoing negotiations to form a government. Every sign indicates that the DSS will not miss any opportunity to ratchet up the pressure to strengthen its hand -- with the press already speculating that Kostunica may push for a unity government that would include all parties.

POLT